



Connecticut State University
American Association of University Professors

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John O'Connor
Testimony in **Support for HB 6859, SB 1177, SB 1178, SB1180**
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Good afternoon Senator Kushner, Representative Sanchez, and all the members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is John O'Connor and I teach at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain. I am the acting Vice-President of CSU-AAUP, a union that represents 3,000 members across the four state universities. CSU-AAUP is a member of the Recovery for All coalition, and we believe that if our state implemented the coalition's Equity Agenda, Connecticut would be a better place for us all.

Everyone on this committee knows that Connecticut is an incredibly wealthy state but it is also defined by severe racial, gender and economic inequities. Folks talk about how we have two Connecticuts and they are correct – we see very different experiences and outcomes in East Hartford and West Hartford, in Bridgeport and Westport. Unfortunately, we are a state of extremes.

Connecticut workers, like workers everywhere, face a number of challenges and obstacles – technological change, job insecurity, inflation, precarious employment, and management by stress. Addressing these challenges and obstacles will require a greater level of worker organization and power than the labor movement currently wields.

I am testifying in strong support of four bills that I think will enhance fairness and respect for workers in our state. The more rights that workers have, the more equity we will have in our state.

I support **House Bill 6859** a bill concerning Predictable scheduling. This bill will benefit approximately 250,000 shift workers in the retail, hospitality and food services. All workers have a right to a good, stable job that pays them a living wage and treats them with respect. Asking employers to give employees their schedule at least two weeks in advance is not an outrageous ask, it is common sense. And if a worker's schedule is changed with less than a week's notice, that worker should be compensated.

Senate Bill 1177 regarding One Fair Wage warrants support by this committee. With roughly 70,000 tipped workers in Connecticut (70% of them are women, 38% workers of color), eliminating the subminimum wage will help eradicate systemic racism and gender inequity. If the minimum wage is going to increase so should the subminimum wage (\$6.38). Reliance on tipping is often discriminatory, and this bill would help deal with this problem.

I also support **Senate Bill 1178**, an act expanding Paid Sick Days. With over 88% of workers in Connecticut are not guaranteed paid sick days under current law, we have a social problem that we need to fix. One way to address this is to cover all workers by removing the employer size threshold and lengthy definition of "service worker" outlined in current law. Legislation should require all employers, regardless of size or industry, to provide paid sick time to their employees.

Finally, I would like to speak up for **Senate Bill 1180** an act concerning Rideshare and Delivery Drive minimum standards. This bill would for the first time in Connecticut set a minimum pay standards for rideshare and delivery drivers, and it would require tech platforms to be transparent about what they charging and paying.

I urge the committee to support all of these bills. Prioritize the rights of Connecticut workers and support these key bills.

Thank you for allowing me to testify this morning.